



The Engine selects VC veteran as new CEO and president

Accelerator prepares to fund teams that demonstrate long term vision

By Patrick Wahl
NEWS EDITOR

MIT's startup accelerator and venture capitalist fund The Engine selected experienced Boston entrepreneur and investor Katie Rae as its president and CEO Tuesday, according to an MIT News release.

The Engine has been in the process of choosing its leadership since before it was first announced last October. The Engine also named members to its Board of Directors and Investment Advisory Committee, including Israel Ruiz SM '01, MIT executive vice president and treasurer, Anantha Chandrakasan, head of the Department of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science and Robert Kraft, a New England business magnate known as the owner of the New England Patriots.

The board of directors engaged with recruiting firm Heidrick & Struggles during the search for a president, Ruiz said in a call with *The Tech*. The team sought a candidate with experience in growing technology startups and early-stage investment, and with connections in the Boston ecosystem.

Since 2010 Rae has worked with innovation-centered firms including Techstars Boston, Startup Institute, and Project 11 Ventures. Before

that, she was the senior director of products for Microsoft Startup Labs in Kendall Square.

She has also worked with Harvard Business School and MIT's Sloan School of Management, and spoke at StartMIT's Innovation Night Jan. 11.

"My absolute favorite thing is working with funding teams," Rae said in a call with *The Tech*. "The more impactful they are, the more fun it is to work for them."

The Engine is already well known within the Boston innovation and investment community. Rae said that over 100 venture capital firms have written to her since the announcement, expressing their excitement about The Engine's upcoming inaugural investments.

"We have had a lot of enthusiasm since the launch in October," Ruiz said. "Many people want to see this succeed."

Peter Boyce II, an overseer at the student-oriented venture capital fund Rough Draft Ventures, said that he is enthusiastic about the opportunities The Engine will open up for students in the Boston area.

"We see an increasing number of companies at the intersection of technology and [cutting-edge] sci-

Engine, Page 7



DAMIAN BARABONKOV—THE TECH

The MIT Model United Nations club welcomed high school delegates at an opening ceremony in Kresge Auditorium.

Hearing postponed for student arrested for unlicensed firearm possession

The second hearing for Angel De La Cruz, an MIT senior arrested last month for unlicensed possession of firearms in his dorm room, has been rescheduled to Mar. 13, according to his lawyer, Kristin Weberg. The hearing was originally to take place Feb. 13. De La Cruz is currently being held in custody without bail.

De La Cruz nevertheless made an appearance at court Tuesday. Many people showed up to support him, Weberg said in a call with *The Tech*.

Asked why De La Cruz was denied bail when arraigned last month, Weberg replied that the state had decided to move for a "defining of dangerousness based on the level of his

crime." She added that she may appeal the state's decision in an effort to have De La Cruz released on bail before his postponed hearing.

De La Cruz's original attorney was public defender Bruce Ferg. According to Weberg, De La Cruz retained her as his new attorney about two weeks ago.

— Vivian Zhong

Broad Institute will retain patents for CRISPR

Patent denied to competing biotech groups, Univ. of Calif. considers appeal

By Andrew Pollack
THE NEW YORK TIMES

The Broad Institute in Cambridge, Massachusetts, will retain potentially lucrative rights to a powerful gene-editing technique that could lead to major advances in medicine and agriculture, the federal Patent and Trademark Office ruled Wednesday.

The decision, in a bitterly fought dispute closely watched by scientists and the biotechnology industry, was a blow to the University of Califor-

nia, often said to be the birthplace of the technique, which is known as CRISPR-Cas9.

An appeals board of the patent office ruled that the gene-editing inventions claimed by the two institutions were separate and do not overlap.

The result is that the Broad Institute, a research center affiliated with MIT and Harvard, gets to retain more than a dozen patents it has already been granted on the use of the Crispr technique to modify DNA in the cells of humans, animals and

plants.

"It seems to be a decisive victory for the Broad Institute," said Jacob S. Sherkow, an associate professor at New York Law School who has followed the case closely.

The Broad Institute, in a statement, said it agreed with the decision. Officials at the University of California said they were considering an appeal, although they noted the ruling left the door open for the university to obtain its own patents covering the use of Crispr for all types of cells.

"They have a patent on green tennis balls; we will have a patent on all tennis balls," Jennifer Doudna, a professor at the University of California, Berkeley, said in a phone call with reporters. She has been widely credited as an inventor of the gene-editing technique.

Ultimately, companies wanting to apply Crispr for use in medicine, agriculture or other fields might need licenses from both the Broad Institute and the University of Cali-

CRISPR, Page 4

EVACUATED!

W20 shut down last night after a sewer line main may have broken, causing water to back up into the building and flood the loading dock.

An email sent to the w20-occupants mailing list at 6:41 p.m. announced the problem with the sewer line and explained that the building's water had been shut off as a result.

Over the course of the next hour, students in the building were asked to leave.

A UA Council meeting scheduled for 7:30 p.m. was re-located at about that time to 1-379.

Members of *The Tech* finished up this week's issue in 8-119.

ASA accepting applications to new student groups again

The moratorium imposed on new student groups by the Association of Student Activities has ended, meaning students can once again register new clubs. After a semester of not recognizing new groups due to understaffing and an outdated application system,

the ASA has resumed the recognition process as originally planned.

According to ASA President Nichole Clarke '18, the ASA Board is not understaffed anymore. It is also making final preparations for "the stage-one roll-out of the new database," wrote Clarke in an

email. As *The Tech* reported in October, the new online application and database is supposed to ease the burden for ASA board members reviewing applications, and streamline the process for students starting clubs.

— Drew Bent

IN SHORT

Community meetings about the development of the Volpe site will be held today at 12 p.m. in W20-308 and 5:30 p.m. in Salons 5-7 at the Marriott Cambridge.

The OpenMind::OpenArt Gallery, an exhibit about neurodiversity and mental health, opens today at 6:30pm in the room next

to LaVerde's, W20-106.

Class of 2019 Ring Premiere will take place Friday at 7:30 p.m. in Kresge. Doors open at 7 p.m., and a 2019 MIT ID will be required for entry.

There is no class Monday for President's Day, and Tuesday will feature a Monday schedule. Enjoy the long weekend!

HOPE FOR THE FUTURE

An Iranian professor on the current political climate. **CAMPUS LIFE**, p. 3

A PARTISAN CAMPUS

MIT needs to face the world. **OPINION**, p. 2

MANY ACTS IN ONE

Dramashop puts on eclectic theater tableaux. **ARTS**, p. 6



MIT RULES THE COURT

Basketball season finishing strong. **SPORTS**, p. 12

A SMOOTH FINISH

MIT figure skating club performs at home. **SPORTS**, p. 12

SECTIONS

Opinion2
Campus Life3
Arts6
Fun Pages9
Sports12

Find your place at The Tech



NEWS



OPINION



PHOTO



SPORTS



CAMPUS LIFE



BUSINESS



PRODUCTION

join@tech.mit.edu

TECH TRANSFERS

Mohammad Alizadeh

Immigrant members of the MIT community

I am an Iranian immigrant. I came to the United States in 2006 for graduate school, accompanied by my wife and soulmate. We both finished our PhD's at Stanford University. Since then, I've worked in a startup, a big company, and now, as an Assistant Professor of computer science at MIT. I'm proud to be Iranian, and I'm also proud to call the United States home. This country has given me incredible opportunities and put me in a position to follow my passions and do what I love. I strive to give back each and every day with my teaching and research.

I'm deeply worried about the current political climate and attitude towards immigrants, but I'm also hopeful. I have a four-month-old son, Omid (which means "hope" in Persian). I'm hopeful for his future. I believe the amazing people of this country will reaffirm American values once again.

Editor's note: Tech Transfers is a photo series by Professor Daniel Jackson that features immigrant members of MIT.

Mohammad Alizadeh is an Assistant Professor in the department of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science.



Mohammad Alizadeh, assistant professor of computer science.

DANIEL JACKSON

CAMPUS LIFE CAMPUS LIFE CAMPUS LIFE CAMPUS LIFE CAMPUS LIFE

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CRISPR patent “could be worth hundreds of millions of dollars, or even more”

CRISPR, from Page 1

fornia, a lawyer for the university said. However, Sherkow said he was doubtful that the university could obtain a broad patent, given the wording of Wednesday’s decision. Crispr has generated excitement among biologists because the technique makes it relatively simple to change particular letters in an organism’s DNA, much like using word processing software to search for particular words and then deleting or replacing them. That could allow for the development of new disease treatments that would fix defective genes in the human body. Crispr could also make it more practical to alter the DNA of human embryos, making changes that could be passed to future generations. An influential national advisory panel said Tuesday that such heritable changes should be allowed only in the narrowest of circumstances, to prevent infants from ac-

quiring genes that would cause serious diseases, and only when there was no alternative. If Crispr lives up to its promise, the patents on the technique could be worth hundreds of millions of dollars, or even more. However, related techniques, such as gene therapy and RNA interference, have also been described as having great promise and have resulted in few or no medical treatments so far. Several companies are trying to develop medical treatments using Crispr, although they are in the early stage of development. The stock of Editas Medicine, which holds licenses to the Broad patents, shot up nearly 30 percent Wednesday. By contrast, shares of Intellia Therapeutics and Crispr Therapeutics, which have licenses to the intellectual property from Doudna and her colleagues, each fell nearly 10 percent. Those two companies, and others, may now have to negotiate licenses to the Broad patents, most

likely by paying fees and royalties. It is rare in the medical field for one patent holder to block another party from bringing a medical treatment to market. There have been some exceptions, such as Amgen’s current effort to block a rival cholesterol-lowering drug. But the Broad Institute and the University of California have given every indication that they want Crispr to be applied widely for public benefit, so the ruling Wednesday is unlikely to slow down research. Crispr is an acronym for a natural process used by bacteria to fight viruses. Doudna, along with Emmanuelle Charpentier, now of the Max Planck Institute for Infection Biology in Germany, helped figure out how the process worked and demonstrated that the system could be used to cut DNA at any particular point in an organism’s genome. Their initial demonstration of the editing technique used chemicals in a test tube. Still, the publica-

tion of their paper in the summer of 2012 set off a rush to apply the technique to plant, animal and human cells. Several months later, Feng Zhang, a young scientist at the Broad Institute, was one of the first to accomplish the task. In a surprise to researchers in the field, the Broad Institute was granted a series of patents covering the use of the technique in cells that have nuclei, including human cells and plant cells. The University of California, along with Charpentier and the University of Vienna, where she once worked, challenged the patent award, and the patent office began a procedure, called an interference, to determine the rightful inventor. The University of California and its allies argued that once the technique had been demonstrated in the test tube, it was obvious that Crispr editing could be applied in human and plant cells with a little tweaking. The Broad Institute











countered that significant inventive work was required by Zhang to get the technique to work in cells with nuclei. On Wednesday, a panel of three judges of the Patent Trial and Appeal Board sided with the Broad Institute, saying that the paper by Doudna and Charpentier did not provide a “reasonable expectation of success” that the technique would work in plant, animal and human cells. In a 51-page decision, the judges cited statements made in 2012 by experts in the field, including Doudna, saying that it was not yet known if the technique would work in human cells. Still, Doudna and Charpentier have won various awards, a sign that many peers consider them to be pioneers in Crispr gene-editing. It remains to be determined if they can get their own patents and, if so, how broad they will be. © 2017 New York Times News Service

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NEC's Jordan Hall

Jan. 28, 2017

**BEETHOVEN: String
Quartet, Op. 18, No. 4**

**SCHNITTKE: String
Quartet No. 3**

**BEETHOVEN: String
Quartet, Op. 130, with
original finale Grosse
fuge, Op. 133**

The Danish String Quartet has drawn critical praise for its performances since its 2002 debut at the Copenhagen Summer Festival. Its four members--violinists Rune Tønsgaard Sørensen and Frederik Øland, violist Asbjørn Nørgaard, and cellist Fredrik Schøyen Sjölin--are renowned for their wonderful balance in their performances, a difficult feat to pull off. I confess that I am indifferent to string quartets but the Saturday evening performance warmed me up to the sound and timbre of strings.

Beethoven's String Quartet in C Minor, Op. 18, No. 4, opened the evening with four parts. Their interpretation of the exposition is solemn and tense: the notes waver in hesitation before erupting into a dramatic finish. Rather than overdramatizing the performance, the Danish String Quartet chooses a mellower touch. Their interpretation remains balanced and expressive, and the elegant chemistry between the instruments seem effortless, an aspect carried through the concert.

Moving towards the modern era, Alfred Schnittkes' Quartet No. 3 draws us away from the more classical harmonies of Beethoven yet never quite leaving. A polystylistic work, the Quartet contains experimental and dissonant passages, drawing inspiration from traditional and contemporary compositions. It draws inspiration from Beethoven and Shostakovich, borrowing certain passages in tribute to these past composers. During more dramatic moments, the quartet carries through a mesmerizing yet foreboding tone before shifting to a more delicate touch when playing an elegant pizzicato. such a compelling and fervorous interpretation of the piece made for a standout performance on Saturday evening.

The quartet closed off the evening with Beethoven's String Quartet, Op. 130. Although not quite as strong a performance as their Schnittke, this Beethoven was still a solid interpretation of the work as written. Sharper, warmer notes greeted the audience as the classical piece allowed the harmonies of the four musicians to shine. Each musician is balanced with the others—the melody line was clear without overpowering the harmony lines.



The Danish String Quartet performing at NEC's Jordan Hall.

The use of the original finale, Grosse fuge, Op. 133, is an interesting choice, given the historical context of the original piece. The conclusion was not well received in Beethoven's time and although Beethoven disapproved of the audience's reaction, he replaced the finale with a rondo. The performers execute the Grosse fuge with grace and sophistication, and like Schnitzke's Quartet, the audience is brought back to an intriguing blend of styles. Controversial in its day, the lengthy fugue is powerful statement to end on.

The concert brought this musical thread full circle, starting from the 19th century's Beethoven before moving into the 20th

century's Schnittke and then returning to back to Beethoven once more . This arrangement was likely a very conscious decision, as Schnittke's String Quartet No. 3 contains hints of Beethoven woven into the melody in repeating motifs. The Danish String Quartet's attention to detail is indicative of the enjoyment and passion they have for their work. These instrumentalists bring their own interpretations of classical quartets into the 21st century. In this way, the Danish String Quartet builds upon a long-standing musical tradition of drawing inspiration from the past. I eagerly await their future forays into the world of classical music.

Happy theater, sad theater, weird theater

Say hello to some of the funniest, wackiest, intense-est, and weirdest one-act plays you have ever seen. MIT Dramashop presents *The One Acts*, a collection of concise 30-minute plays that hit home hard. Among the plays chosen this year were “Bad Auditions by Bad Actors,” directed by Peter Duerst ’18; “The Dreaming,” directed by Raine Haskew ’17; “Guilt,” directed by Elizabeth Parizh ’17; and “Are You Normal, Mr. Norman?” directed by Colin Aitken ’17.

Dramashop kicked off *One Acts* with “Bad Auditions by Bad Actors,” in which a hapless casting director and her apathetic assistant set out to cast the leads for a community theatre production of *Romeo and Juliet*. Things quickly turn sour. From head-in-the-clouds dreamers to kick-ass interpretive dancers, there is a bad auditionee with every quirk you can imagine.

Next up was "The Dreaming," a metaphysical play in which two people find themselves waking up inside a room with no doors and

with no memory of who they are or how they got there. Their initial suspicion eventually crescendos into an existential crisis. Robert Thorpe '18 and Hunter Richardson '19 bring us two quirky characters: one highly suspicious of the other, the other not taking any intelligent steps to fend off suspicion. Hijinks ensue as they realize they are trapped within the pages of an author's play script.

Third came "Guilt," in which one character traps another inside a box. As the play progresses, the audience discovers why. Although the writing and dialogue was a bit dry for me, this play gave us a stellar performance from actresses Victoria Longe '17 and Matisse Peppet '20. Longe brings out the grief and sorrow of a regretful mother exceedingly well as she recounts the day she inadvertently killed a little girl. Peppet plays the part of the wronged little girl with brilliant flair.

The final show "Are you Normal, Mr. Norman?" was particularly noteworthy. This show stars a seemingly normal human being, Norman Norman (Melanie Abrams '17), who goes to the dentist for a toothache. Little does he know that what starts out as a very

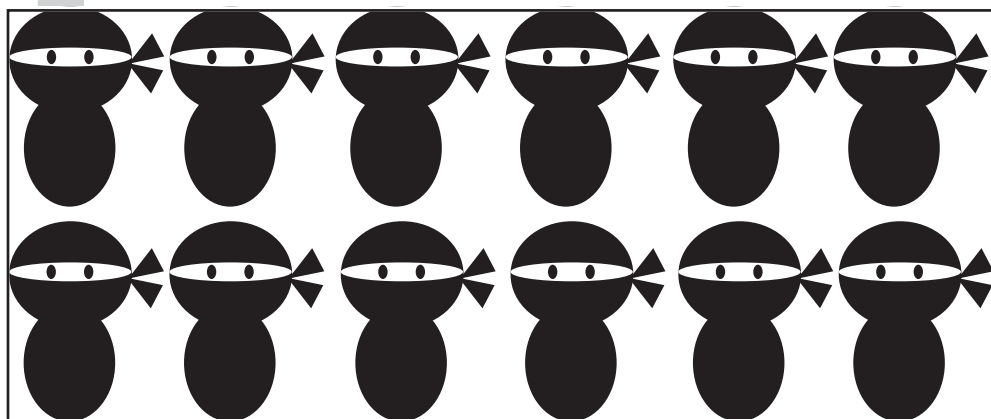
normal toothache evolves into a nightmarish hellfire of a situation, involving a mad dentist, a crucifixion, and the pulling of 32 teeth (not really). If weird is what this play was going for, it succeeded perfectly. The audience itself follows the characters to the brink of sanity.

"I picked this play because it's weird," says Aitken. "You see a lot of theater that makes you happy, theater that makes you sad — but not a lot of theater that's weird. I wanted a piece that would make the audience confused."

He certainly succeeded with me. I left the theater scratching my head, totally uncertain what themes to take away, wondering if there even *was* a theme to take away. It was good — confusion can be cathartic — but it was no doubt the weirdest play I've seen in my life. Kudos to Colin for a wonderfully and crazily directed show!

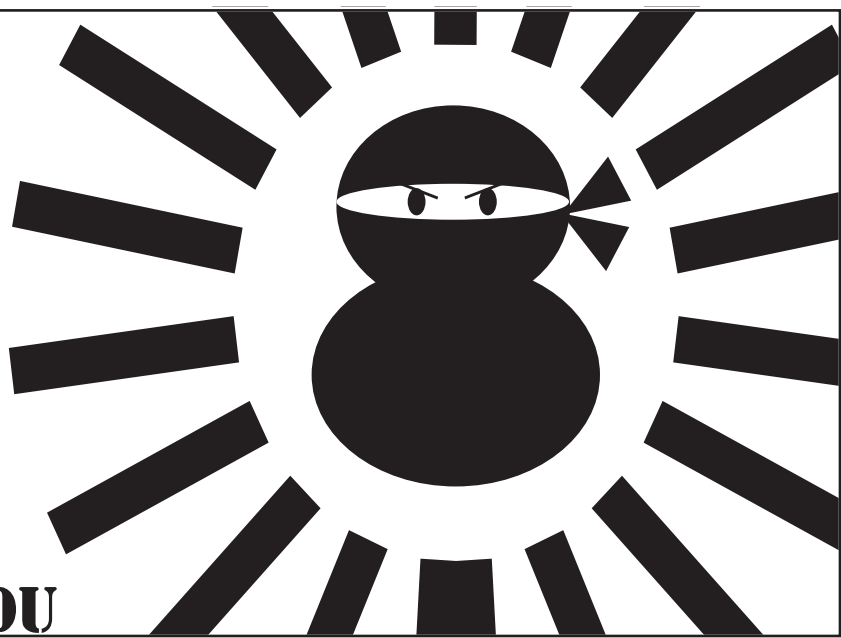
The One Acts showed in Kresge Little Theater from February 9-11 at 8pm. I'm thoroughly impressed by the brilliant work put on by MIT Dramashop and look forward to more in the future.

"Are You Normal, Mr. Norman?" directed by Colin Aitken '17



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The Engine fills gap between private and gov't sponsorship

Engine, from Page 1

ence,” Boyce said in a call with *The Tech*. He said that The Engine will provide access to workspaces and hardware typically out of reach of entrepreneurs.

Stan Reiss of Matrix Partners conveyed a similar sentiment. “There is a ton of very good university technology that just needs time, and our funds, with 10-year lives, aren’t set up for very long development cycles,” Reiss said in an email to *The Tech*.

The Engine is designed to fit inside a niche between private investment firms, which typically follow short life-cycles, and government-sponsorship, which will often fund exceedingly long-term projects.

“This kind of company, what we’re trying to do, is very hard,” Rae said. “There’s a reason why this is not happening. This will require time and stability and patience. People may become impatient to see results, but the MIT community is invested in changing this for good.”

Rae said that she hopes to see 10 organizations like The Engine across the world in 10 years. Boyce mentioned that other schools al-

ready have similar programs, such as Harvard’s innovation lab, which brings together students from across departments to collaborate in an entrepreneurship-oriented workspace.

The next step for The Engine will be to choose a group of startups to fund.

Rae said of the process, “You need to have a founding team that’s complete enough that they can make significant progress. They have to have a long term vision of what they want to create and their impact in the world. What most people stumble on is that they don’t have a team — they don’t have to have a complete team, but they have to have that foundation and the science behind it.”

Of evaluating the science behind a startup, Rae said “sometimes we’ll be right and sometimes we’ll be wrong about whether it will work.”

One of The Engine’s working groups directed by Chandrakasan is focusing on the effects of President Trump’s immigration-restricting executive order, according to Rae. “We are a country of immigrants, and we are very concerned about this.”

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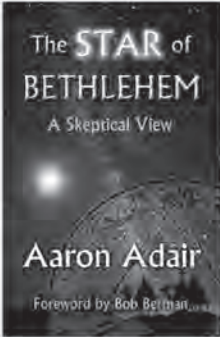
a thinking approach to disbelief and secularism



SUBJECT 1

SCIENCE, RELIGION, AND ASTRONOMY

The Star of Bethlehem in a New Light

Dr Aaron Adair, author of *The Star of Bethlehem: A Skeptical View*, speaks about the scientific explanations for claimed religious phenomena, with the Biblical tale of the Star of Bethlehem as a central case study.



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MON, FEB 27 | 2 PM - 3:30 PM | MIT Bartos Theater, E15-070



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Charlotte Moth, *Noting Thoughts* (2011)
Installation detail
Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Marcelle Alix, Paris
Photo: John Dean



MIT List Visual Arts Center



ANSELMO CASSIANO—THE TECH

Justin Wright, a negotiating instructor who graduated from Yale, led a series of workshops throughout January to help attendees with career building. The event was organized by MIT Spouse and Partners.



VIVIAN ZHONG—THE TECH

The Tech seeks a temporary office after the student center is shut down on the night of publication.

Solution to Apple
from page 9

1	5	3	2	6	4
4	2	6	5	3	1
2	6	4	3	1	5
6	4	2	1	5	3
5	3	1	6	4	2
3	1	5	4	2	6

Solution to Pen!
from page 9

4	6	5	2	3	1
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5	1	6	3	4	2
2	4	3	6	1	5
1	3	2	5	6	4
6	2	1	4	5	3

Solution to We're Stuffed
from page 9

P	A	S	T	A	T	A	M	A	T	M					
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